



TEN TIPS FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TDM

1. **VALUE THE PARTNERSHIP:** Believe that the community has a role in child protection and that child welfare agencies must share responsibility and work with neighborhood partners to strengthen birth parents and enhance their ability to keep their children safe and nurtured.
2. **SHARE RESPONSIBILITIES:** Rely on established community partners to recruit representatives, and jointly plan effective orientation and training for representatives to ensure they have adequate knowledge and confidence to be full participants.
3. **ASSUME GOOD INTENTIONS:** Trust that representatives are invested in keeping the child's best interest and particularly his/her safety first and foremost, while supporting the family. Maintain an inclusive attitude and team mentality. Support the agency's commitment to shared decision-making.
4. **DEMONSTRATE APPRECIATION:** Develop a working relationship based upon respect, acceptance and recognition of the value community partners add to TDM. Ensure agency staff are well-trained in cultural issues and that meetings reflect sensitivity to differences.
5. **PROVIDE INFORMATION:** Ensure parents understand community partner's role and the potential benefit for them so parents can make an informed decision regarding the community member's participation
6. **BE CREATIVE:** Search for ways the birth parents' community can support the family and child. Embrace the uniqueness and differences of communities. Ensure team examination of non-traditional, as well as, traditional services to decide if the services can promote safety, offer support and/or reduce risks.
7. **AFFIRM THE COMMUNITY'S STRENGTHS:** Empower the community representative to support birth parents and promote understanding of the family's community during the TDM, while keeping the child's best interest central in TDM process and decision.
8. **RESPECT SUGGESTIONS:** Demonstrate appreciation for viewpoint, skills, knowledge and resources of partners. Value input and contributions. Thank community representatives for their participation, insights, ideas and opinions.
9. **TALK OFTEN:** Maintain open communication with the community group or collaborative which the representative represents; request and offer suggestions, guidance and feedback.
10. **CONFIRM BENEFITS:** Share quarterly data reports with community representatives and collaboratives. Provide information about how community members' participation is impacting on lives of families and children from their community. Recognize community reps; celebrate progress publicly!

